

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

August 1998

Wireless E911 technology becomes more prevalent

Last month, UPDATE covered wireline E911 and New Kent County's experiences when implementing it. This month's issue examines wireless E911 and its impact in Virginia.

"RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia State Crime Commission be directed to study the wireline and wireless 911 and E911 systems, the #77 service, and the effect of such calls on state and local public safety agencies."

(House Joint Resolution No. 215)

Early Wireless E911

A mere 10 or so years ago, the State Police shouldered the responsibility of fielding wireless E911 calls. "In the very beginning when we took the wireless E911 calls, there really weren't that many cellular telephones," said State Police Communications Officer,

Capt. John Furlough. "Since then, there's been a proliferation of wireless telephones and now, over 50 percent of the calls we get are for localities and have to be rerouted. This delays the calls, and in some situations, every few seconds count. We feel the most appropriate locations to handle wireless E911 calls are the local



Public Safety Answering Points."

In response to the increasing volume of wireless E911 calls, the State Police established the #77 service (pound key, 77). An ongoing public information campaign lets cell phone owners know that if they want to reach the State Police

in an emergency, they dial #77. The number was implemented with the idea that localities would eventually be taking wireless E911 calls directly.

At issue in Virginia is whether state or local government is responsible for fielding wireless E911 calls. At this point, the Eastern Shore, the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and the cities of Alexandria, Charlottesville and Lynchburg receive their wireless E911 calls directly.

In 1996, however, the Federal Communications Commission permanently changed the parameters of the debate.

The FCC Order

■ Nationwide, 95 million 911 calls are made each year.

■ In 1994, almost 18 million wireless calls were made to 911 and other public

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Message from the State Coordinator

by Michael Cline

I would like to take a moment of your time to share some thoughts as I begin my term as your state coordinator. First, I thank all of you who have called and written to offer congratulations and support. I truly appreciate your encouragement, and I look forward to working with you to make emergency management in Virginia the best it can be.

Second, I want to assure you of our continued effort at VDES to foster a coordinated, multilevel system of emergency management in Virginia. My intent is to support a system that recognizes the importance of each member of our emergency management community — local, state and federal government; quasi-public and private organizations; and paid and volunteer citizens — a system that

gives each person in these groups a voice in developing and implementing programs and policy.

We are faced with a multitude of new and changing challenges, ranging from an increased risk of terrorist attack, to the ever-rising cost of disaster recovery, to the need to better mitigate against the hazards we have faced for years. However, we also have the most capable and most dedicated people in the nation already at work identifying those challenges and developing the programs and procedures to deal with them.

VDES remains committed to supporting the emergency management community with viable, coordinated programs and training. This brings me to a final thought. I sincerely solicit your continued and renewed input. Our planners and program

managers need your ideas and feedback to help ensure the vitality and workability of our services.

If you see a problem or have an idea for resolving an issue, call me at 804/897-6501, e-mail: mcline.des@state.va.us, or call your regional coordinator or program contact at VDES and talk about it. If we keep open communication ongoing and really work at coordinating our efforts, I know we will continue to provide the citizens of our Commonwealth with the highest levels of disaster preparedness and response.

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Wireless E911

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service numbers.

■ Results of a recent survey indicate 62 percent of cellular users cite safety and security as their main reasons for purchasing a mobile phone. (Information from the 1996 FCC 96-264 document)

In the 1996 FCC Order 94-102, private industry providers are mandated to provide the wireless E911 service to government on request. It is up to the government agency/jurisdiction whether to request the service or not.

This order, and subsequent related documents, proposes a two-phase process that would be completed by 2001. Phase One requires providers of wireless E911 to allow identification of the wireless phone number and location of the cell site or base station receiving the call. Phase Two requires providers to develop and implement a true wireless E911 service, in which both caller and location are precisely identified.

In response to this mandate, the Virginia General Assembly recently passed legislation that will impact state and local

public safety organizations. "FCC Order 94-102 sets out that local government can implement E911 for wireless calls by requiring local providers to put the technology in place to provide such a service. The order also stipulates the provider can recover the costs," said Arlington County's Mike Edwards, Virginia Municipal League member and legislative liaison on wireless E911 issues. "The Virginia legislation is in direct response to this order."

One such piece of legislation is House Joint Resolution No. 215, which mandates a study of E911 and #77. The study will examine the effectiveness of the current system, identify jurisdictions that don't have wireline or wireless E911 services, propose ways to provide those services, identify how wireline and wireless E911 can be most effectively funded, target current and projected volumes of E911 calls over the next seven years, and examine other related issues.

The second major legislative action is the *Wireless Enhanced Public Safety Telephone Service Act* or HB 1331.

Web Site offers insightful analysis

To keep up with the issues, visit the APCO-VENA Web site at <http://vaapco-vena.org>. It offers full texts of relevant Virginia General Assembly legislation and analyzes these and other topics thoroughly and informatively.

For public safety people, there's lots of good information and plenty of interesting links to explore. From this site, you can link to the APCO home page to get a national perspective regarding the issues.

This law provides an E911 funding mechanism for both local government and the telecommunications industry. It requires industry providers to collect a monthly billing surcharge of 75 cents from their wireless phone customers which goes into a wireless E911 fund. This is then distributed to local government and the service providers to help defray costs of providing a wireless E911 service.

The bill also establishes a state-level advisory board with representatives from a range of involved groups — including a local government representative — that assists in administering the fund and in monitoring its effectiveness. "If the board approves, a locality can tap into the fund primarily for equipment and for reimbursement for staffing," said Steve Marzolf, president of the

Virginia Emergency Number Association (state chapter) and technical manager of Prince William County's Communications Center. "Wireless providers send their bills to the board. The law guarantees that costs will be reimbursed if it's allowable under the code."

As the General Assembly, the public safety community and private-sector providers shape the future of communications in Virginia, the need to resolve issues related to wireless communications will most likely become more pressing. "Statistics provided by the cellular industry state that every day, on average, 26,000 wireless phones are sold across the country," said Marzolf.

Call Steve Marzolf at 703/792-7146 or Mike Edwards at 804/643-3857 for more information.

Virginia programs featured in FEMA compendium

Two Virginia programs were selected to be included in FEMA's upcoming *Compendium of Exemplary Practices in Emergency Management*, due to be released in September. These are Stafford County's Emergency Response Citizen Assistance Team (ERCAT) and the Virginia Department of Emergency Services Reservist Program.

Both programs creatively tap into volunteer resources to supplement full-time staff during disasters and emergencies. Stafford County's ERCAT, made up primarily of

retired citizens from the community, helps to field non-emergency citizen inquiries when the EOC is activated, which frees 911 dispatchers to concentrate on emergency calls. The volunteers are highly motivated and are kept involved through social gatherings, drills and mock call-ups.

The VDES Reservist program, developed by Operations Supervisor Sam Hoffman, taps into the talents of a large pool of private-

and public-sector workers. This experienced cadre supplements regular staff during emergencies and disasters and are trained through VDES-sponsored exercises and applicable VDES and EMI courses.

VDES congratulates these individuals and their organizations for their achievement.

For information about getting your program in the next compendium, call Maria Younker at 202/646-2672. Visit FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/pte/exempract.htm> to download a submission form or to read the online version of the compendium when it is released.



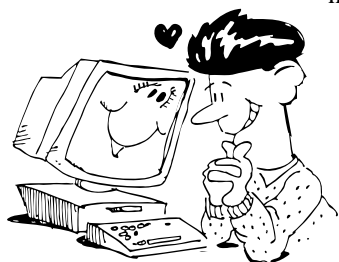
HAZ MAT

Database organizes Tier 2 information

It gives first responders a strategic edge in the first half hour to 45 minutes of a hazmat response. It promotes and supports the exchange of information between LEPCs around the state. Finally, it encourages the sharing of resources and their effective deployment. But it's not a piece of equipment or a new training program; it's pure, 100 percent information.

Over the last year, the Technological Hazards Division has been developing a comprehensive database of Tier 2 information, using CAMEO software as the interface. When complete, the database will be shared statewide with regional hazmat teams, state hazardous materials officers, LEPCs and other stakeholders in the hazmat arena.

"The purpose of this program is to make the information available in a way that it can be more effectively applied during a



hazmat incident, as well as promote regional planning, training and exercising," said George Roarty, chemical emergency response branch chief. "We are putting it in a form that will allow first responders to quickly and easily access Tier 2 information regarding chemicals at a facility.

The CAMEO software allows us to put this information into a functional framework. All of this gives first responders a 'leg up' during the first half hour of the response, because they'll know what they're walking into."

About 90 percent of Virginia's 114 LEPCs have been able to receive the CAMEO software at no cost through the Environmental Protection Agency, which is funding the database project. "This is the first time the majority of LEPCs in the state, as well as the hazmat teams and hazmat officers, have had the same software," said Roarty. "We were given a unique opportunity to propose the database project."

In addition to the Tier 2 reports, which includes information such as facility contacts, the type and quantity of chemicals stored on site and the manner of storage, the database has profiles of over 4,000 chemicals. These chemicals are linked to Response Information Data sheets, a software feature that provides a general description of the chemical, its associated properties, health and fire hazards and recommended protective clothing. "We also hope to add in a resource component so that we can identify critical resources typically used in a response," said Roarty.

The project is being executed in four phases: collecting the data, entering the data into the software, reviewing, revising and (continued at top of next column)

then distributing the database, and finally, defining procedures through which to update database information. "The LEPCs and the regional hazmat teams are equal and vital partners in this process," said Roarty. "Perhaps most critical are the updating

procedures which will be done at the local and regional level. Participation by these groups is critical because the database is only as good as the latest information in it."

For information, call George Roarty at 804/897-6574, email: groarty.des@state.va.us

Public Assistance program implements major changes

by Bob Andersen
VDES Public Assistance Officer

The Public Assistance Program, as we know it, has undergone a complete reengineering process. The revamped procedures will be implemented September 1 of this year and are meant to speed the PA process by providing more guidance and less paperwork.

The new version requires greater participation by local government than in the past. Some aspects of the program have not changed, such as the Preliminary Damage Assessment. This will still be done by a team of federal, state, and local representatives, but the assessment will be more complete and more detailed. Information gathered will be used at a later point in the application process described below.

As in the past, in a federally declared disaster, FEMA will open a disaster field office. Briefings will still be held to inform applicants of state requirements. A Request for Public Assistance (RPA), formerly known as the Notice of Interest, will be completed at this time.

FEMA will appoint a person, called a SPOC for "Single Point of Coordination," who will work directly with each applicant throughout the process. During "Kick-Off" meetings attended by

everyone in the locality involved in disaster recovery, the new procedures will be introduced and explained.

It is at this point local government involvement is greatest. PA applicants will **write their own small** Damage Survey Reports which have been renamed Applicant's Project Identification Worksheets (APIW). Rather than require multiple Damage Survey Reports for each site, the new APIW forms develop damage estimates by project, incorporating information from the Preliminary Damage Assessments. Guidance for completing these worksheets is given at the "Kick-Off" meetings.

For estimating costs on large-scale projects, local government will be assisted by a project officer who is assigned by the SPOC. This person assists the applicant with formulating large projects in what are called Project Identification Worksheets. Large projects will be validated when written and actual costs will be paid when the project is completed.

Smaller projects will no longer be individually approved by FEMA. Instead, the agency will validate the applications by randomly sampling about 20 percent of small projects to ensure that applicants have developed (continued on p. 4)

Training Calendar

Operations Division

Exercise Design

August 11-12
Richmond

Mass Fatalities Incident Management

August 18-20
Waynesboro

Coordinator's Briefing

August 26-27
Smyth County

Reservist Training

VEOC Tabletop Exercise and EIS Sustainment

September 9
Richmond
For information, call the VDES Training Office at 804/897-6557

Technological Hazards Division

Hazardous Materials Incident Management

September 21-23
Virginia Beach
For information, call Ron Hargrave at 804/897-6573

Public Safety Response to Terrorism: Awareness

August 14
Lynchburg
August 28
Abingdon

Public Safety Response to Terrorism: Management Considerations

August 15-16
Lynchburg
August 29-30
Abingdon

Public Safety Response to Terrorism: Awareness

One class offered on September 30 and October 7
South Hill
For information on the Terrorism classes, call Mike Schlemmer at 804/897-6568

CAMEO Workshop

September 1-2
Lynchburg
For information, call George Roarty at 804/897-6574

Other Training

Underground Storage Tanks

September 3
Richmond
For information, call Christine Coggins at 804/828-4548

Conferences

Public Safety Educators' Conference

August 7-9
Richmond
For information, call Lisa Porter at 804/520-9387 or Patti Witt at 804/733-2657

PA Program

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complete, accurate scopes of work; the work is eligible for federal assistance; the methodology of cost estimates is accurate and eligible; and special considerations have been identified and addressed. The validation takes place within 15 days after the SPOC receives the applicant's Summary of Small Projects.

If FEMA's samples meet its eligibility requirements, all other small projects are approved without review and will be paid in advance (following state requirements).

Federal funds should be available three days after this process. The state will then meet with applicants to convey funds, as in the past.

To ensure continuity at the state level once FEMA has left, a state counterpart will be assigned to each person FEMA appoints. This sketch of the new program is just a thumbnail overview meant to inform you that it's coming and will be used in the next presidentially declared disaster.

For more information, call Bob Andersen at 804/897-6538, e-mail bandersen.des@state.va.us

..... **EIIP Web site takes off**

Under a cooperative agreement, FEMA and the International Association of Emergency Managers (formerly NCEM), have developed the Emergency Information Infrastructure Partnership (EIIP) Internet initiative into a vital resource.

Through real-time chats, newsgroups and mail lists, emergency services people can exchange information and ideas and build partnerships.

Visit the EIIP Web site at <http://www.emforum.org>

sample its offerings. Regularly scheduled events include:

Tuesdays - 1:00 p.m.

"Brown bag" sessions during which pertinent information, tips and ideas are exchanged;

Wednesdays - 12:00 noon

Moderated live online events featuring speakers in the Virtual Library, Virtual Classroom, EIIP Panel Room, or the Tech Arena;

Thursdays - 8:00 p.m.

Round Table discussion on a topic of the week featuring different guest speakers.



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UPDATE is a monthly publication of the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. For permission to reprint articles in your publication or on the Internet, please call 804/897-6510.

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